









**Department of Environmental Quality  
Office of Environmental Assessment**

**OVERVIEW OF POST-KATRINA DATA FOR ZIP CODE 70040**

The sediment and/or soil within the area flooded by Hurricane Katrina were tested to determine if there were contaminants present that might pose a risk to residents or the environment. Samples were collected at 15 locations within the zip code. Testing results indicated a variety of chemicals were present in the sediment/soil. These chemicals included primarily metals, petroleum hydrocarbons (such as diesel and oil), and pesticides that were used years ago (such as chlordane, dieldrin, and aldrin). The presence of these chemicals is not surprising since metals are naturally-occurring in the soil and petroleum products and pesticides are commonly used in every day life and, therefore, are present in our environment. The most significant findings of the sediment/soil testing are summarized below.

- Metals. The concentrations of the metals detected in the sediment/soil were consistent with levels found naturally in soil and therefore do not pose a concern.
- Petroleum Hydrocarbons. Petroleum hydrocarbons were found at the majority of the locations sampled. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) (chemicals found in petroleum products, exhaust from automobiles, asphalt, etc.) were also found in a limited number of the sediment/soil samples. The levels of all petroleum-related chemicals were below the level of concern at all locations tested.
- Pesticides. Several pesticides were found at a limited number of locations sampled but in all cases the concentrations were below the level of concern.

The sediment/soil testing results show little to no health risk in the areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina. In addition, sediments are no longer present at many of the locations that were sampled soon after floodwaters receded. Therefore, exposure to the sediment/soil is not expected to result in long-term health effects if people avoid obvious signs of hazardous materials, practice good personal hygiene, and use common sense. Some people may suffer from short-term effects related to dust, pollen and mold – which are prevalent because of the flooding and time of year.

Post-Katrina air monitoring results indicate that the concentrations of chemicals and particulate matter in the air have been, and continue to be, below state and federal health-based regulatory levels.